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**Non-Violent Instruments of Statecraft:
The China Challenge**

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The purpose of this paper is to assess the non-violent instruments of statecraft that will likely be of greater and lesser value to the United States over the next ten years. Rather than trying to make sweeping generalizations that could apply to all of the United States's foreign relations, this paper will examine the value of non-violent instruments of statecraft to one critical concern: United States relations with China. The rationale for this "case study" approach is that the value of each of the non-violent instruments of statecraft can vary greatly depending on the context. Instruments that are appropriate for relations between the United States and a friendly, democratic, industrialized market-economy country may not be as appropriate for relations with a non-aligned, authoritarian, developing country.

Objectives. The value of the instruments of statecraft depends on the strategic objective(s). The value of the means can only be determined in consideration of the desired ends. Before considering the value of the various instruments of statecraft, the objective must be stated. According to the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, the objective of United States policy toward China is to "encourage the emergence of a China that is stable and non-aggressive; that tolerates differing views and adheres to international rules of conduct; and that cooperates with us to build a secure regional and international order."¹ Inferred in the phrase "tolerates differing views" is a reference to the question of human rights in China and the phrase "adheres to international rules of conduct" speaks to an objective of strengthening China's integration into non-proliferation regimes.

¹ Stanley O. Roth, "China's MFN Status," Testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, Subcommittee on Trade, Washington DC, June 17, 1998.

The most fundamental United States objective is to encourage the emergence of a stable, non-aggressive China. To achieve this objective, United States policy has focused on promoting further liberalization of the Chinese economy to a market economy. As this paper will argue, the United States's greatest opportunity is to pursue economic relations with China that simultaneously foster greater political pluralism and responsible international behavior.

China is concurrently viewed as a partner and a threat, depending on the context. As a partner, Beijing prefers a permanent peaceful settlement on the Korean Peninsula and is an important trading partner of the United States; the fifth largest trading partner according to the United States Trade Representative's 1998 Annual Report. As a threat, China has the potential to proliferate weapons of mass destruction including the delivery means and is suspected of operating an espionage operation at an American nuclear weapons laboratory. With its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, China is in a position to either cooperate or veto U.S. initiatives. Since the Nixon Administration, the United States chose to engage rather than isolate China.

***“Trade remains a force for social change in China, spreading the tools, contacts and ideas that promote freedom.”
President Clinton, June 3, 1999***

Non-Violent Instruments of Statecraft. The most valuable instrument for strategy toward China has and will continue to be the cooperative instrument of trade. Since the late 1970s, economic modernization is the Chinese government's highest priority. The United States is undertaking a long-term strategy to influence Chinese behavior through encouraging Chinese reform toward a more market-oriented, global economy. Nurturing a market-oriented, global economy supports all of the United

States's policy objectives. For example, concerning the objective of a non-aggressive China that cooperates with the United States to build a secure regional and international order, promoting greater economic ties between China and its neighbors, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia, will make for stronger incentives for China to act in concert with the region to build a stable peace. As the United States Trade Representative argued, "trade agreements themselves represent acceptance of deeper concepts: development and publication of laws and regulations; consistency in decision making; recourse to law enforcement and judicial proceedings; curbs on the arbitrary exercise of bureaucratic discretion."² Analysts outside the U.S. Government also argue that modernizing China's economy and expanding its international perspective "would encourage and perhaps accelerate the inevitable transformation of China's political regime. Our experience with postwar Japan, while far from perfect and subject to many crucial differences with the situation in China, suggests that we should make every effort to engage the rising economic superpower in global leadership institutions."³

Public Diplomacy. Public diplomacy -- the tools governments use to communicate both specific policy objectives and larger national values to foreign publics -- will be an extremely useful instrument.⁴ The long-term nature of this instrument is a natural complement to the long-term strategy of promoting a stable and non-aggressive China, primarily through economic instruments. Public diplomacy is the best-suited instrument of statecraft to proselytize democratic values to the people of China. The

² Charlene Barshefsky, "China Trade in America's Pacific Strategy," Speech to the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, Washington DC, May 4, 1999.

³ C. Fred Bergsten, The New Agenda with China, International Economics Policy Briefs, no. 98-2 (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, May 1998)

⁴ Laurence D. Wohlers, "America's Public Diplomacy Deficit," NWC Student Paper, 1997, p. 1.

Secretary of State recognized the value of public diplomacy in achieving United States objectives for China when she said “engagement can contribute to an environment in which the Chinese people have more access to information, more contact with the democratic world, and less resistance from their government to outside influences and ideas.”⁵

In June 1998, during his visit to China, President Clinton conducted a public diplomacy campaign, which Secretary of State Albright described on Capitol Hill:

During the summit, President Clinton spoke out more openly and forcefully about human rights in China than any foreign leader has ever done in that country. And he did so not in one isolated instance, but in a series of very public appearances. The President's trip exposed hundreds of millions of Chinese to America's conviction that human rights are universal -- and that human freedom is indispensable to any country's effort to compete in the world economy.... Once people see the power of the mass media to improve their lives by providing information and exposing wrongdoing, it becomes very hard to close their eyes again. And once people understand that another, freer way of life really is possible -- that it exists elsewhere and that it works -- it becomes very hard to deny it to them forever.⁶

A successful public diplomacy campaign cannot consist solely of an occasional Presidential trip. For this instrument to be valuable, it must consist of a broad-based, ongoing program of exchanges, scholarships, information, and cultural activities that targets the successor generation⁷. In addition to these “face-to-face” methods, the United States should also conduct “mass media” public diplomacy by employing the Voice of America, Radio Free Asia and the Internet.

⁵ Madeleine K. Albright, “Opening Remarks on China MFN,” Testimony before the Senate Finance Committee Washington, D.C., July 9, 1998.

⁶ Albright.

⁷ Wohlers, p. 10

International Organizations. Securing Chinese participation in international organizations will continue to be an extremely valuable instrument of statecraft over the next ten years. As Secretary of State Albright said to Congress, “There is no greater opportunity -- or challenge -- for U.S. foreign policy than to encourage China's integration as a fully responsible member of the international system.”⁸ While China claims it should be treated as a great power, it more likely should be categorized as “middle rank power”; a nation with sufficient power that “in peacetime the great powers bid for its support.”⁹ Beginning in the 1980s, China recognized that it must participate in international organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and the International Atomic Energy Agency if it was to live up to its self-proclaimed status as a “great power.” For this instrument to be most effective, the United States should consult widely with Asian and European partners to secure Chinese participation in international organizations and adherence to their norms. According to the findings of a Council on Foreign Relations study group, when the United States seeks to influence Chinese behavior it will not be successful if it unilaterally seeks to impose the conditions of China’s involvement in world affairs. American bilateral efforts are most effective when reinforced through multilateral efforts and supported by the bilateral efforts of others.¹⁰ Beijing recognizes, but is resentful of the United States being the world’s sole superpower.

International law. In many respects, the value of the instrument of international law will be the same as the value of international organizations. While it was a goal of

⁸ Albright.

⁹ Michael Yahuda, “China’s Search for a Global Roll,” Current History, vol. 98, no. 629, p. 267.

United States policy for China to agree to the Nonproliferation and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaties and the Chemical Weapons Convention, Beijing was persuaded to do so through international persuasion, rather than bilateral diplomacy. Again, as in the case of membership in international organizations, China can be persuaded to sign up to important international treaties as it signifies its status as a “global power.” Adherence is another issue. In building the case for China’s membership to the World Trade Organization, the Institute for International Economics reviewed Chinese compliance with international agreements on the environment, intellectual property, nonproliferation, and private agreements, and concluded that Chinese compliance generally ranges from poor to fair.¹¹ The United States will have to adopt multilateral diplomatic efforts to persuade China to adhere to international law.

Alliances. The instrument of bilateral alliances will be one of the least valuable tools for the United States to obtain its strategic objectives for China within the next ten years. An alliance is a “formal or informal commitment for security cooperation between two or more states. The defining feature of any alliance is a commitment for mutual military support against some external actor(s) in some specified set of circumstances.”¹² From the Nixon-Kissinger opening to China in the 1970s until the Soviet Union’s collapse in the late 1980s, Washington sought to cultivate Beijing as a counterweight to Moscow. The demise of the Soviet Union eliminated that rationale. Additionally, the brutal crackdown in June 1989 of pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing’s Tiananmen

¹⁰ Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy, Shaping U.S.-China Relations: A Long-Term Strategy (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), pp. 50-51.

¹¹ Daniel J. Rosen, China and the World Trade Organization: An Economic Balance Sheet, International Economics Policy Briefs, no. 99-6 (Washington DC: Institute for International Economics, June 1999), pp. 9-10.

¹² Stephen M. Walt, “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse,” Survival, vol. 39, no. 1 (Spring 1999), p. 157.

Square decisively ended any lingering ideas about strategic partnership with China.¹³

While both countries share some economic, security, and political goals, there is no mutually perceived threat to justify establishing a bilateral alliance.

Alliances with other Asian countries contribute to United States objectives for a non-aggressive China. For example, the US-Japan security alliance eliminates any need for China to feel threatened by Japan. So long as the United States maintains its military presence in Japan, Beijing will have no fears about a revival of Japanese militarism or that Tokyo would acquire nuclear weapons.¹⁴

Coercive Instruments. Sanctions. The use of economic sanctions -- the denial of customary export, import or financial relations with a target country in an effort to change the country's laws or policies -- will not be a valuable tool for dealing with China. Encouraging the transition of the Chinese economy to a market economy that is integrated into the global economy is the foundation of American strategy to create a stable, non-aggressive China. The United States has pursued a policy of "positive sanctions" with regard to China. Washington sought to encourage Chinese behavior with rewards and positive reinforcement rather than with threats. The White Houses's rationale for this approach is that a market-oriented, global economy strengthens the hand of reform advocates within China, which will be the engine or catalyst for change. Positive economic incentives, including normal trade relations, "helps us to move China

¹³ Bates Gill, "Limited Engagement," Foreign Affairs, vol. 78, no. 4 (Jul-Aug 1999), Internet edition, p. 2.

¹⁴ Robert J. Art, "Geopolitics Updated: The Strategy of Selective Engagement," International Security, vol. 23, no. 3 (Winter 1998-99), pp. 110-111.

toward global norms on human rights, weapons of mass destruction, crime and drugs, and the environment.”¹⁵

While sanctions may not be a valuable tool, in all likelihood, that does not preclude their use over the next ten years. Even if the Administration prefers to employ “positive sanctions,” the legislative branch and even state and local governments can enact sanctions.¹⁶ Additionally, sanctions are often employed, and will continue to be employed, as a form of expression, regardless of whether contribute to foreign policy objectives. Imposing sanctions signals official displeasure with a country’s behavior or action, e.g., proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, lack of respect for human rights, and armed aggression. It gives United States foreign policy a moral dimension. Lastly, imposing sanctions has been, and will continue to offer a nonmilitary alternative to the difficult choice of doing nothing or going to war over interests that are less than vital to the United States.¹⁷

Assessment. The United States has several non-violent instruments of statecraft at its disposal to achieve its strategic objectives toward China. Due to Beijing’s commitment to economic modernization, the most valuable policy tool will be the cooperative instrument of trade. By encouraging market-oriented reforms and greater participation international economics the United States intends to plant the seeds for greater political reform. Public statements by the Administration recognize that this is a long-term strategy. Internationally, trade and participation in multilateral organizations

¹⁵ The White House. Office of the Press Secretary, “Statement by the President,” Washington DC, July 17, 1999.

¹⁶ Richard N. Haass, “Sanctioning Madness,” Foreign Affairs, vol. 76, no. 6 (Nov-Dec 1997), Internet edition, pp. 1-2.

are intended to provide incentives for China to participate in and abide by the rules of the international system. A vital complement to this long-term approach is an increased use of the instrument of public diplomacy, which can expose China's next generation of leaders to the ideas of political reform. Because China views itself as a "global power" it does not need much prompting to join international organizations and sign up to international treaties and conventions. China's adherence to these organizations and laws has been mixed. To ensure adherence, the United States must expand beyond bilateral diplomacy. Experience has shown that China is more likely to be persuaded through multilateral efforts and supported by the bilateral efforts of other nations than by being confronted by the United States alone.

¹⁷ Haass, pp. 1-2.